

OVCA and Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park staff invite you to

Help Control Fountain Grass

on roadsides in Hawaiian Ocean View Estates



WHEN: 8:30A-2:30P,

Thursday, July 25

**WHERE: Meet at Ocean
View Community Center**

**WHAT TO BRING: Lunch,
water, hat, sunscreen**

For questions or to

REGISTER BY EMAIL:

**Stacey_Torigoe@nps.gov
(808)-985-6085**

What is fountain grass? Fountain grass (*Pennisetum setaceum*) is a highly flammable perennial bunch grass native to Northern Africa. The grass was first brought to Hawai'i in the early 1900s for landscaping. It escaped cultivation, and today populations are spreading on the Big Island, in North Kona, and South Kohala. In these areas, fountain grass can dominate the natural landscape and displace native plants, many of which are threatened with extinction.

Why is fountain grass a problem? Fountain grass is a highly aggressive, fire-promoting species. It accumulates large volumes of dead biomass and burns rapidly with high intensity. Fountain grass further intensifies fire potential because it is one of the few invasive species that can colonize young lava flows. As a result, wildfires can spread unchecked into surrounding forests, pastures and subdivisions. In August 2005, fountain grass was responsible for the spread of a 25,000 ac wildfire that forced the evacuation of Waikoloa. The Hawai'i Department of Agriculture has declared fountain grass a noxious weed in the State. For more details, see <http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/fact/pese1.htm> and http://www.hear.org/pier/species/pennisetum_setaceum.htm

What is the best way to control fountain grass? Uproot small populations by hand. Collect seed heads in bags and throw them in the garbage. You may contact Stacey Torigoe for assistance removing larger fountain grass populations or plants from residential lots in HOVE, at Stacey_torigoe@nps.gov or (808)-315-4815.

Fountain grass is invading subdivisions in Ka'u. Small fountain grass populations are found throughout Ocean View. If populations are left unchecked, the grass will continue to spread and result in increased fuel loads and fire hazards in subdivisions. Fortunately, in most areas populations are still small and control efforts to remove or contain the spread of the infestations are still feasible.